

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR."

# ALL THE YEAR ROUND

A Weekly Journal

CONDUCTED BY

CHARLES DICKENS

WITH WHICH IS INCORPORATED

"HOUSEHOLD WORDS"

NO. 354. NEW SERIES.

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 11, 1875.

PRICE TWOPENCE.

## HALVES.

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CHAPTER XVI. DR. WILDE.

It was several days before brother Alec returned to the Priory, and during his absence great alterations and improvements were made in the house for his future behoof. A small room adjoining his own (but on the other side from mine) was made to communicate with it, and the Kirkdale upholsterer was directed to fit it up as a little boudoir. Thus, in case the old man should fail in health, which seemed only too probable, he would have his sitting-room upstairs, while the bed-room itself was supplied with some handsome articles of furniture—of which, indeed, it stood in no little need. "Business," however, as John observed, "was not carried on as usual during the alterations." Mrs. Raeburn was not herself. Her domineering manner was gone, her incisive speech had become mild, she ceased to toss her head back in her impatient equine manner. The impression on the family circle, which did not, however, extend to the domestics, to whom it was whispered she was more "cantankerous" than ever, was that the mistress of the house was bent on making herself agreeable—"going into training," her son called it—against the return of her guest. This explanation of so great a change was not, however, completely satisfactory. That she should be civil and conciliatory to brother Alec was only to be expected, but why should she give herself the trouble to be so to ourselves, and even to her husband? Perhaps the

consciousness that it was owing to her own misbehaviour in this respect, that the prize of her brother-in-law's wealth had been lost to her and hers, might have made her penitent and humble; but that again seemed highly improbable. In the meantime, we all took advantage of this favourable state of things and basked in the unexpected sunshine, with two exceptions. The attorney was in very low spirits, and took more than ever to his usual remedy for them; and the parrot pined. Chico, who had accompanied his master from Stanbrook, had been placed in Gertrude's charge, who lavished every attention on the bird, but he was dull and listless. He would not eat his customary fruits, and while they lay in untasted profusion about him, would inconsequentially croak forth, "All gone! all gone!" in sepulchral tones. In spite of his scarlet plumage he had a widowed look, and in consequence of certain snatches of lugubrious rhyme which he had picked up—it was said from myself—was reported to be composing an In Memoriam. The bulldog, on the other hand, who had never been gay and festive, like Chico, took his master's absence philosophically enough. It being out of the question to let him remain in his old quarters, where he would have made mincemeat of the upholsterer and his men, he passed most of his days in the drawing-room, enjoying the utmost respect of all who met him there, and utterly unconscious of the incongruity of his position.

Notwithstanding the change for the better in Mrs. Raeburn's behaviour towards myself, it struck me that I had become somewhat more isolated from the rest of the family than had heretofore been

the case. The attorney and his wife and son now held frequent councils together, to which I was not admitted, nor did John unbosom himself concerning them with his usual charming frankness. This circumstance would in no case have distressed me, but as it was, it was above measure welcome, since it left Gertrude and me alone together. They might plot and plan as they liked for what I cared—for I did not believe, as Mrs. Raeburn would have had me credit, that their talk was all about the domestic alterations—and welcome. Like the great national poet, who,

His arms about his dearie, O,  
Bade warl'y cares and warl'y men  
To a' gae tapsalterie, O,

I cared nothing about the family schemes, provided only they should not be devised to part me from Gertrude. At the same time, I protest, though a poet myself, to whom the licence of the profession might fairly have been permitted, I never ventured to put my arm round that young lady. Matters were very pleasant and comfortable however, because the love was understood between us, and when once that foundation has been established, conversation of all kinds has its charms. Among other things, we talked, of course, of our expected guest.

"Why my poor cousin should wish to come back again to the Priory, after what he has suffered here," observed she, "I cannot guess, Harry!"

"I can," said I. "In the first place, where else is he to go to? At his age he cannot make new friends, nor can his money purchase them; it can only purchase ease and comfort, which await him here. And though he has an enemy in this house, he has his true friend also. One especially, who, I am sure, is a great attraction to him. If I had been in his case, and been treated ten times worse, I should still prefer to live at the Priory if you were its inmate, Gerty."

To this compliment, instead of a burst of gratitude, I received this reply, which will explain how matters stood between us:

"You!—Yes, of course you would, sir; but then you are not cousin Alec."

When the old man returned, he looked as though he had come back, not to live with us, but to die. His appearance shocked us all, and probably his sister-in-law as much as any, since the shorter his span of life, the less often

would his quarterly payments enrich the domestic exchequer. In a moment of sentiment, I heard her murmur to Gertrude, "What an enormous annuity your poor dear cousin must have got!"

And, curiously enough, he himself almost expressed as much. "I do assure you, my dear Sheddon," said he, with a faint touch of his old humour, "the annuity people thought I was tricking them. Everybody does look as ill as they can, it seems, when bent on such a business, and they were of opinion that I rather overdid the thing. It took all your uncle's respectability to carry me through with it."

The jest was a sad one, and the sadder because it reminded me of those early days when the old man had been full of jests. It was hard to believe that scarcely a year had elapsed since he had arrived among us, tolerably hale to look at, and with a flow of good spirits that had benefited our social atmosphere, as the Gulf Stream is said to warm the climate. If anybody chilled him—by the expression of what he deemed harsh or heartless sentiments—he had always had a vigorous reply ready; but all that was now over. His mental powers seemed to be, in a manner, palsied by the revelation of the baseness of his relatives, or, rather, of his brother—for I think that it was through him alone that the fatal wound had been inflicted; and the failure of his physical frame, which the hardships and anxieties of his life in America had, moreover, tried severely, was, doubtless, owing to the same cause. He was but a year older than his brother, yet, in spite of the effects of Mark's bad habit, which was growing more and more apparent, he looked his senior by ten years.

Of course there was no longer any question as to whether our guest at the Priory should have medical advice or no. He would still have preferred to do without it, but Mrs. Raeburn "insisted" upon her brother-in-law seeking the aid of science—"If not for your own sake, Mr. Alexander, at least for ours," as she innocently expressed it, intending to be very civil, and using, as such persons do, the first conventional phrase that occurred to her, without respect to its meaning. So Dr. Wilde was accordingly called in. This gentleman, as I have already mentioned, had not been long resident at Kirkdale, and was still designated by its tea-table conversationalists as "our new medical

acquisition." He had purchased, about two years ago, the practice of the late Mr. Rombold, a gentleman who had brought half the present generation of the town into the world, and assisted half the last generation out of it; and though he had by no means so many patients as his predecessor, he had an excellent reputation for skill. What gave Dr. Wilde a great advantage in securing this high opinion of his neighbours was, that, materially, it was of no consequence to him, since he was possessed of independent means. It pleased him, rather than otherwise, to see many of the ordinary cases that had helped to swell his predecessor's income, slip out of his hands into those of Messrs. Bell and Doldrum, the general practitioners. He liked his profession for its own sake, not for what it brought him, and took the same interest in a complicated case as a chess-player in a problem; not, indeed, that he did not feel for the patient—far from it—but when he lost the game—if the sick man died—he took it to heart, and spent long hours over the matter still, trying to discover how it was that he had been beaten. Nobody ever complained that Dr. Wilde did not take pains enough, or hurried one case over in order to attend to another, though it was said, by persons who liked to twaddle over sick-beds, that he was too "impetuous." With patients also who liked to fancy themselves ill, he was not a favourite, for he was very impatient with them, and would "neglect" the richest of them in a very unhandsome manner, for the sake of some wretched creature in Tinker's-alley, who happened to have "a complication." But he generally brought the wretch "through," and the rich man recovered without his aid.

Dr. Wilde possessed other elements of popularity besides his means and his skill. He was a bachelor, and still young, which made him, socially, very "eligible." He was sometimes called in, it was whispered—but the atmosphere of Kirkdale was electric with scandal—to lady cases which the patients themselves would have had him believe were affections of the heart, that he alone could cure. On the other hand, there was one serious drawback to his character; he was never seen at church, nor even at chapel. Dr. Rombold, who had had thrice his practice, always made a point of appearing there, at all events till the first lesson, when his man-servant generally used to hurry in with an urgent

face, and carry him off on some professional errand. Dr. Wilde had no such excuse, and his absence was resented. If the gossips had known what I came to know in later years respecting him, they would have resented it still more. The fact which formed the explanation of his shortcoming in this respect, and also of his being so obstinately proof against the charms of the Kirkdale belles, was a curious one. To the hospital with which Dr. Wilde was connected in London, was brought one day a young lady who had been run over in the street; her injuries were severe, and it was long before she was pronounced sufficiently recovered to leave the private room, which had been granted for her use at the request of her friends. She had been placed under Wilde's care, at that time a very young practitioner, but who had already earned for himself a reputation in the profession, and throughout her sickness and convalescence she had been tended by her sister, a very beautiful and attractive girl. With this sister the doctor fell in love. It was not calf-love; he was eight-and-twenty years of age, and by no means given to flirtation. His affection—for passion it could in his case scarcely be called—was returned, nor did any difficulties oppose themselves to their union in the way of money matters. His social position was superior to her own, her father being a Baptist minister, with little means beyond what he derived from the pew-rents of his chapel, while the doctor possessed an independent fortune. For some time things promised fair for the young couple, till, in an evil hour, Dr. Wilde permitted himself to be drawn into a theological argument at the minister's table. To fall out with one's father-in-law is the common lot of humanity, but to quarrel with him before marriage it is possible by prudence to avoid. Wilde was not imprudent, but he considered it to be his duty at all times to maintain the truth. His antagonist went farther; he was of opinion that we should not make companionship with the Infidel. Unhappily, the truth of Dr. Wilde was the error arrived at by a religious and thoughtful man whom his friends pronounced to be "crotchety," while the truth of his opponent was the heresy of a Baptist minister. The latter gentleman informed Dr. Wilde that no man who held such opinions, however eligible in other respects, should, with his consent, become the husband of his daughter. The match, he said,



which had hitherto been of so goodly a savour to him, now stunk in his nostrils like a brimstone-match.

"Say nothing in haste," pleaded the doctor, who found his own temper very difficult to restrain.

"Don't talk to me of haste, sir!" thundered the heterodox divine; "this is not a question of time, but of eternity!"

If there was one thing the doctor disliked more than Homœopathy, or the Anti-vaccination Society, it was the cant of the conventicle, and he said so.

Eventually the minister rang the bell for his daughter. "You must choose," said he, "between this man and me; nay, between perdition and salvation."

This alternative, for a tender-hearted young person of nineteen years of age, devoted to her lover, but who had gone to chapel regularly, and thought herself to blame when she did not enjoy it, was a terrible one; but the matter ended in the doctor's dismissal. No one believes in broken hearts in these days, so that we will take it merely as a romantic coincidence that this dutiful and charming girl faded away, and died before three months were out; yet just before she expired she sent her former lover a letter, which would seem to imply that she laid her death to their separation; "only," she was careful to add, "neither you nor dear papa were to blame."

From that moment the hospital became intolerable to the doctor, though his work was dearer to him than ever; and, finding country air and outdoor exercise essential to his well-being, he bought Dr. Rombold's practice at Kirkdale. The profession in London could not conceive "why Wilde should have thus thrown up his chances and gone to bury himself alive in the North;" while the profession at Kirkdale, who were secretly persuaded of his superiority, and were not ignorant of his previous reputation, had no doubt there was "something fishy" in the whole transaction. Even some of the more intelligent Kirkdale laymen thought so too, but were not displeased at the result. They felt like some poor country gentleman who has engaged a classical tutor for his son, at fifty pounds a year, and finds he once held the Ireland scholarship at Oxford.

This brief account of a most remarkable man I have thought it right to set down, since he afterwards played a considerable part in our domestic drama.

## TIPS AND VAILS.

THERE are gifts which are only nominally gifts, so far as the giver is concerned. They are but taxes in disguise—liabilities that may not be ignored, extortions that must needs be submitted to. Indeed, to the receiver even they seem to be dues rather than donations. As he pockets them, a pleasant sense that right has been done may pervade him, but no strong feeling of gratitude for an unexpected benefit stirs within him. Christmas-boxes are in the nature of these pseudo-gratuities. It cannot be said that they are distributed very cordially—nowadays at any rate. Well, to the postman, perhaps, who is usually welcome to the street-door; the possibility of his bringing us pleasant tidings somehow overriding the certainty of his delivering to us, in due season, our unpaid bills. But to the turncock? the dustman? the scavenger? the lamplighter? the beadle? No; the conviction arises that these functionaries should be paid for their services by their employers, and should not seek additional remuneration at the hands of strangers. Nevertheless, their applications to be "remembered," as it is called, at Christmas, scarcely abate, although they may, perhaps, have met with less success in these later years than formerly. And then there are fees to box-keepers, wearing the air of donations, yet in truth compulsory payments, in discharge of the small debt incurred by having the seat we are to occupy in the theatre formally pointed out to us. Only sixpence; yet oftentimes that sixpence costs the giver a good shilling's worth of annoyance and indignation. And does the receiver suffer in no way? Does he not feel the mockery resulting from the contrast between his comeliness of aspect, his evening dress of black broadcloth, his spotless cravat and unrumpled shirt-front, and the mendicacy of his office? the soliciting of sixpences—like a bold beggar, too, who will take no denial, but will rather, if denied, proceed to outrage and violence!

Gifts to servants, "tips" or "vails" as they were designated in the last century, are, however, the most serious of these social taxes, and, indeed, are hardly so much free-will offerings as exactions, which custom and tradition have sanctioned—not wholly without challenge, as shall presently be shown.

The subject of "vails" has often dis-



turbed the world both of masters and of servants; and, although the word has become obsolete, the thing is still extant, its proportions being now, however, far less formidable than once they were. One still hears occasionally of game-keepers who look to receive "paper" from each member of a shooting-party—nothing short of a bank-note being held worthy of their acceptance. And sometimes we are told that gold is expected by the housekeeper in charge of the castle, or mansion, or other place in the country, in return for her exposition of its contents: the grand gallery, the library, the blue chamber, the yellow withdrawing-room; with their painted ceilings and carved mantelpieces, and various portraits and pictures. But exorbitancy in the matter has generally departed. Certainly times are altered since those early days of Captain Gronow, when, as he relates, "if one dined at any of the great houses in London, it was considered absolutely necessary to give a guinea to the butler on leaving the house." Yet this "very bad habit," as the gallant officer pronounces it, could boast a long continuance—a distant origin. A century and a half before, Pope had decided that he could not afford to dine with the Duke of Montague, finding that each dinner involved the disbursement of five guineas to the servants of Montague House. Subsequently the duke accompanied his invitations to the poet with an order for the amount in question. This was his Grace's way of avoiding offence to his servants and the breach of an old custom, the while he secured the pleasure of his friend's society, which, to so rich a nobleman, was surely cheap at five guineas.

In the *World* of the 25th February, 1754—the *World* being the publication famous for the contributions it received from the great Lord Chesterfield—a correspondent discusses the absurdity of giving vails to servants, and the inconveniences arising from that perverted form of benevolence. It is charged against a certain noble lord that, by his connivance at the custom of bestowing gifts upon his servants, he, in truth, compelled his guests to pay for the entertainment afforded them at his table; indeed, it is almost hinted that his hospitality had thus been turned into a source of profit. The attendants are described as very numerous, and their exertions are done full justice to. "They get about you, are very diligent, fetch you

whatever you call for, and retire with the tablecloth." But the departure of the guest is the signal for the demands of the servants. He is then made sensible of the responsibilities he has incurred. "They are drawn into two lines, right and left, and make a lane which you are to pass through before you can get to the door. You are now required to take out your money and apply it first on your right hand, then on your left, then on your right, and then on your left again, till you find yourself in the street." Meantime the situation of the master of the house is described as particularly ridiculous. "He attends you to the door with great ceremony; but he is so conscious of the awkward appearance he must make as a witness to the expenses of his guests, that you can observe him placing himself in a position, that he would have it supposed conceals him from the inhospitable transactions that are going on under his roof. He wears the silly look of an innocent man who has unfortunately broken in upon the retirement of two lovers, and is ready to affirm with great simplicity that he has seen nothing." The case of a guest whom misfortune constrains to be economical in the matter of vails is then set forth. "Having an earnest desire," states the sufferer, "of mixing with those friends whom an early intimacy has most endeared to me. . . . I cannot at all times refuse their invitations, even though I have nothing for their servants. And here, alas! the inconveniences of an empty pocket are as strongly exhibited, as in any case of insolvency that I know of. I am a marked man. If I ask for beer, I am presented with a piece of bread. If I am bold enough to call for wine, after a delay which would take away its relish were it good, I receive a mixture of the whole sideboard in a greasy glass. If I hold up my plate, nobody sees me; so that I am forced to eat mutton with fish sauce, and pickles with my apple-pie." "Mr. Fitz-Adam," the editor, replies to his correspondent, admitting his ingenuity, veracity, and humour, yet supplying ironical arguments in favour of the servants and the practice of giving them vails. Many servants, he alleges, are in the employ of younger sons, who are inattentive to the payment of wages; or of ladies of fashion, who appropriate the "card money" left at their routs and parties, and of right belonging to the servants, to defraying the expenses of tea, coffee, and wax-candles.

The domestics of persons of quality are so numerous, and have so little to do, therefore, that they are under the necessity of spending great part of their time in ale-houses and other places, where, in imitation of their superiors, they divert themselves with the fashionable vices of drinking, gaming, &c.—amusements of an expensive nature, requiring more than bare wages to support them. Other servants, living in the City in the houses of grocers, haberdashers, pastry-cooks, oilmen, pewterers, brokers, tailors, and so forth, have such uncertain humours and so many airs to submit to, that their spirits would be quite broken but for the cordial of vails. Further, it is alleged that at least a third part of the whole body of servants in the Metropolis, for certain wise reasons, pass with their masters for single men, while they have really wives and families to maintain. Could these, it is asked, be supported “in any degree of elegance” if the perquisites of servants were abridged, and their vails withheld from them? Altogether, Mr. FitzAdam humorously decides that he is not only for continuing the custom of giving money to servants, but is anxious to publish his opinion that, in all families where the said servants do not number more than a dozen or fifteen, “it is mean, pitiful, and beggarly in any person whatsoever, to pass from table without giving to all.”

Mr. FitzAdam's opinion was adopted by Dr. Johnson, perhaps from mere love of contradiction and contempt for Scottish manners and customs; for he delighted “to play off his wit” against Boswell's fellow-countrymen and native land. And when Boswell boasted that in Scotland “we had the honour of being the first to abolish the inhospitable, troublesome, and ungracious custom of giving vails in Scotland,” Johnson thundered down upon him: “Sir, you abolished vails, because you were too poor to be able to give them.”

This question of “vails” seems to have been much discussed in the year of King George the Third's accession. The London Chronicle, or Universal Evening Post, of the 16th January, 1760, publishes as an item of news from Scotland, that, at a meeting of the gentlemen, freeholders, and commissioners of land-tax for the county of Aberdeen, one-and-twenty gentlemen came to a resolution to discourage, as far as lay in their power, the custom of giving vails to servants, and for that purpose

engaged, and mutually gave their words of honour, that, in visiting one another, they would give no money to servants, nor allow their own servants to take any money from their guests; holding the practice to be “not only hurtful with respect to servants, but likewise shameful in itself, and destructive of all real hospitality.” The same newspaper, a few days later, announces that the Honourable Company of Scots Hunters, at their annual meeting, held at Edinburgh, had agreed upon a similar resolution. The custom of giving vails is stated to have arrived at a very high pitch, and to have become “not only a great expense, but to be in its consequences very pernicious to servants.” It was judged to be preferable that there should be an increase to the wages of the servants, although nothing definite in this respect was determined upon; but the Secretary of the Company was instructed to notify to the public the resolution that had been arrived at, touching the general subject of vails. An editorial note, appended to the account of the proceedings of the Scots Hunters, highly applauded their resolution, which, it is alleged, “cannot fail to be adopted by the noblemen and gentlemen of every county in England, the first opportunity they have of meeting;” the inhospitable custom in question being alike “disgraceful to the nation, in the eyes of foreigners, and disgraceful both to natives and foreigners.” The columns of the London Chronicle are subsequently much occupied with correspondence upon the question. The editor finds support in the letters of “a country gentleman,” writing from Norfolk-street, who expresses his opinion with abundant force. “With what contempt must foreigners consider us,” he writes, “when they see the numerous and splendid train of servants attending on the great, and reflect that not a fourth, not a tenth part, of these fellows' income is supplied by the man whose livery they wear; the rest is raised by contributions extorted from his friends and guests! . . . Indeed, the contributions these varlets exact are so heavy and burthensome, that a gentleman may often have a genteel dinner at a first-rate tavern, for a smaller sum than he is obliged to pay to them. What a sneaking, awkward figure does a gentleman make (I blush while I write it, as I recollect all the shame and uneasiness I have, a hundred times, suffered on these occasions) when

waiting on his friend to his horse or his vehicle, his guest's right hand locked in his, and the other fumbling in his pocket for half-crowns and shillings, while they pass through a parcel of trim, lazy, pampered serving-men, who, with an insolent, demanding eye, watch the motions of the hand, and hold theirs more than half extended, to receive these shameful doles, which they call their lawful perquisites! In vain the master, with averted look, pretends not to see what he is ashamed of, but has not courage to prevent, and perhaps next week countenances the practice, by giving his friend the same mortification." The country gentleman, however, has quite made up his mind. He will, so far as he can, suppress both the giving and the receiving of vails. He rejoices that the subject is about to be brought before the grand jury of his county at the ensuing assizes. For his own servants, should he find them accepting money from any person, of whatever denomination, entering his gates—"that instant I turn them adrift to the mercy of a press-gang; nor will I, from Lady-day, or from Midsummer next, at farthest, give a farthing to the servants of anyone. I can afford to pay my own servants myself, and want not the assistance of others." Finally, after calling upon men of spirit to imitate the example set by the numerous and respectable societies in the northern part of the island, and by the exhibition—*coûte qui coûte*—of unanimity and vigour "to stem the current, and crush this bloated Hydra," he appeals to the candour of his readers, to excuse the demerits of his letter, for—"I am no orator, Mr. Chronicle; my letter shows it; but my motive is good."

From the topic of vails the correspondence digresses to the consideration of the perquisites received by servants from tradesmen, and to the subject of "card money." Servants are charged, in the case of vails being refused them, with inflicting damage by way of revenge upon the coaches, horses, or apparel of the guest offending them by his economy. In the same way it is alleged they punish the tradesman who withholds from them what they consider their proper fees, by diverting from him the patronage of their employers. Thus, as a matter of self-defence, tradesmen are compelled to comply with the demand of the servants, the cost at last falling upon the master, who is charged extra prices to cover the expense of feeding his domestics. "There

is not a tradesman," writes one correspondent, "who furnishes great families with what may be wanted and is continually called for, but must fee the servant or servants employed to order them, &c., and when his bill is paid must, besides, give a very handsome gratuity to that servant in whose department his matter lay; and if he be paid by a servant, that servant also must have a gratuity. This is the case with the coachmaker, the wheeler, the saddler, the tailor, the upholsterer, &c., &c. All this must be done, or a tradesman lies so open to misrepresentation that may be made to the master by the servant with whom he has to do, that if he refuses to comply with what they call the established custom, he is almost sure of losing that family; and this many servants openly tell them." After the lapse of a century, this question of the perquisites received by servants from tradesmen remains very much where it was.

"Card money" rather concerned the masters than the servants. Each guest was required to pay for the cards, the expense being divided among the company. The host paid his share, by way of setting an example, and was oftentimes compelled to prompt negligent or forgetful guests to contribute their quota. This old-established custom was denounced in the London Chronicle as "sordid, mean, and scandalous." Cards were expensive articles, however, in 1760, while quite a passion for card-playing prevailed, and innumerable "packs" were consumed in an evening's entertainment. The levying of this tax has long since become obsolete, although a trace of the custom remained in the habit, cherished by old card-players, of leaving money upon the table concealed underneath the candlesticks. But with "card money" in addition to vails, it must be confessed that the guest of a hundred years ago was rather severely taxed.

It must not be supposed, however, that the system of "vails" did not find many champions among the correspondents of the London Chronicle. It was quite enough that the custom was old, and that it was English. A noble lord, a determined advocate of vails, threatened to knock down the first servant who refused to receive a gratuity; which was perhaps rather an idle sort of menace. A "true-born Englishman" denounced, in stinging terms, "the penurious gentlemen of the North." Foreigners were bidden to adhere to their



own customs and mind their own business; they were warned not to try to destroy the honourable character of the English nation, or to curb a free people, noted from time immemorial for their humanity, justice, and generosity. The country gentleman, who had written against vails, was charged with avarice, and accused of being some discarded placeman seeking "to ingratiate himself to a good table." He is warned, however, that "without he behaves as an Englishman, he is not worthy to put his feet thereunder." And the writer concludes: "For my own part, I am blessed with a moderate competency, can keep clear of rocks and shoals, and, whenever I dine at a nobleman's or gentleman's table, never leave the house without acting as my father, grandfather, great-grandfather, and all my relations have heretofore done." Another correspondent, signing himself "Lucius," is of opinion that the attempt to suppress vails proceeds from a meanness of spirit, and a degeneracy of that noble and benevolent disposition which our ancestors would have scorned to relinquish, out of complaisance to any foreign precedent whatever. Vails, it is stated, were a voluntary tax, levied by gentlemen upon themselves, for the benefit of those "whom the difference of fortunes hath decreed to servility, to enable them to bear the burthens of Fate;" whilst the opponents of vails are denounced as "a sort of growling mongrels, whom Fortune hath put it out of their power to act as gentlemen, while Nature hath not adapted them for servants." Exceeding admiration is expressed for the domestics of the period; they are described as most likely youths, the flowers of the British Isles, and their politeness in serving at table is greatly commended. The abolition of vails, on whatever beggarly pretence, would, it is alleged, not only deprive the servant of some ready money for his immediate necessity, but would surely rob him further of "the satisfaction he has in knowing that his services have been approved by a majority: which knowledge is the very spring of industry." War is, after a fashion, carried into the enemy's country: for it is argued that, if the vails should be abolished, then the system of perquisites prevailing in all public offices should also be suppressed; a proposition that, no doubt, seemed very monstrous a hundred years ago, when corruption figured largely in every department of the State.

Perhaps the best advocate of the vail

system, as it existed, is a correspondent, "Integrity," who—admitting the genuineness of his letter, and of this there can hardly be any doubt—manifests a very practical acquaintance with the subject.

"Sir," he begins, "I have made an observation that you are always willing to give each party an opportunity to vindicate their own cause. By giving this letter a place in your Chronicle you will not only oblige but serve thousands.

"I have been fifteen years a servant; the nine last I have lived with a gentleman in the middling station of life, and, having made a memorandum of my gain and expenses, I am able to give a true estimate of the same.

My wages for the first four years was £6 per year, the other five at £7 per year; the whole nine years' wages amounting to the sum of	£59 0 0
My vails and perquisites in the said term amounts to the sum and no more than	25 7 6
Which, being added together, makes my nine years' gains to be	84 7 6
My expenses one year with another, viz. :—	
For four pair of shoes, at 6s. per pair	£1 4 0
For mending ditto at 2s. per pair	0 8 0
For three shirts, the making, mending, &c.	0 15 9
For three neckcloths, at 2s. each	0 6 0
For two pair of stockings, at 4s. per pair	0 8 0
For washing the whole year	1 10 0
For one wig in two years, is per year	0 10 6
For spending money when out late at nights, &c.	0 5 0
The real expense in one year is	5 7 3
Which, in nine years, amounts to the sum of	48 5 3
Which, being deducted from the sum above, there will remain clear gains in nine years	£36 2 3

"And now, sir, if I had no vails, I should have had no more to show for my nine years' service than ten pounds fourteen shillings and ninepence; a great sum indeed to keep me when out of place, in sickness, or other casualties.—I am, sir, with submission, your most humble servant,  
INTEGRITY.

"P.S. Where there is one that gets more, there is ten that gets less."

It will be observed from this letter that the wages paid to footmen a hundred years ago were but small, and that wigs were not included in the livery clothes provided by the master. Altogether, the wardrobe of "Integrity" was of a modest kind, some disproportion being evident in regard to the number of shoes required for the year's service as compared with the number of

stockings: there being but two pairs of the latter to four pairs of the former.

But the controversy about vails was not confined to correspondence in a newspaper. It seems that in 1764 certain gentlemen who had resisted the payment of these fees were attacked in Ranelagh-gardens by an angry mob of footmen. The gentlemen were hissed, and abused, and grossly insulted, their assailants proceeding subsequently to destroy the fences, break the lamps, and throw stones through the windows of the Grand Rotunda. They were apprehended and duly punished, constables being afterwards posted at Ranelagh to prevent any renewal of the disturbance.

The employers of the last century possessed a special means of punishing refractory footmen, which has long since departed. This was the press-gang—a very terror to the servants of that period, whose conduct, it must be confessed, often merited severe chastisement. Thus we read in the London Chronicle of a sort of mutiny among fifty of the servants who had accompanied the officers forming part of the English forces in Germany. These servants determined that, if their wages and perquisites were not advanced, they would leave their masters to shift for themselves; but, as their demands were exorbitant, the officers felt obliged to dispense with their services. "Thereupon the servants procured passes to come over to England in the transports lately arrived. At Sheerness, however, the captain of the Princess Royal, being informed of this behaviour, sent his men to press them, when most of them were found good, able men, fitter to serve his Majesty in the station of gentlemen-sailors than of footmen."

Of the objection to "vails" entertained by Samuel Foote, actor, author, and wit, many accounts have been recorded. There is a tendency, however, to father upon the facetious of established fame any comical adventure which seems at all in harmony with their system of humour; hence books of jests, bon-mots, and "good things" must always be viewed with suspicion so far as their authenticity is concerned. There is something of Foote's impudence, at any rate, in the story of the wag who, having dined sumptuously at a great house, presented to each of the servants, drawn up in a line to receive his parting gift—a bright farthing! They ventured to expostulate—to hint that there must be some

mistake. "I never give less, I assure you!" he said with the loftiest air, and made the best of his way to the street. Foote or not, this humorist may claim to have aided in the suppression of "vails" by involving them in ridicule.

## KRESCENZ.

AN IDYL ON THE MOSELLE.

It was evening in the ancient town of Trier; the Angelus was ringing down from the great fortress-like Dom; the little carts and stalls had vanished out of the marketplace; and the carved saints, clustered on the fountain, smiled benignly in the setting sun. Old women in strange head-dresses, beads and books in hand, passed in and out of St. Gondolphus's curious gates; young girls, with long, fair, plaited hair, moved in groups across the open place; brilliant uniforms shone up on the balconies of the Rothe Haus; the shopkeepers in the queer little peaked houses stood at their doors and amused themselves; while the awful black arches of the Porta Nigra frowned more grimly than ever in the glowing light, and the gay and quaint little frescoes at the street corners seemed to blaze out with new colour at its touch. One particularly high-peaked roof was suddenly covered with a flock of white pigeons alighting to rest, and at the same moment a face appeared at a little open window among the birds, looked up and down the streets, and was withdrawn again. The face belonged to a young girl, and the room into which she withdrew was pleasant and neat, if a little bare. A work-table at the window showed that it was the home of a seamstress; a little shrine hung in a corner, with a tiny lamp burning; a few rude pictures decorated the walls. The girl was clothed in a holiday dress of dark green stuff, with white sleeves and apron, and wore a scarlet flower in her breast. She had a soft, sweet, innocent face, and her fair hair hung behind in two long golden braids from her neck to her knees.

As she turned from the window, a curly-haired boy burst into the room.

"I have a message for you, Krescenz. I met Karl, and he told me to tell you he could not see you to-night. He is suddenly sent on business."

A look of disappointment clouded the girl's face; but, after a few moments of silence, she said:

"How good it is that they find him so

useful! But come, Max, you shall not be disappointed of your excursion. You and I will go for our walk, and I will take you for a peep at our cottage."

Max snatched his hat, which he had flung off in disgust, and, locking the door behind them, the sister and brother descended many stairs, and took their way through the streets, and out by the Porta Nigra, into the country.

"Look here, Max, did you ever see anything so gloriously blue as the Moselle this evening? Could you bear to live away from it? How glad I am that our new home will be near it. And look, how magnificent the red light is upon the vine-covered banks, with the crimson earth glowing between! How the tall dark poplars and the golden acacias seem to thrill as they bask in this wonderful light! If I had been a man, Max, I should certainly have tried to be an artist. Karl laughs at me when I say so; he does not care for such things, and gets annoyed when I talk about them; and yet I never saw half the beauty of things till he loved me."

"How many people are out walking to-night, Krescenz. I never saw the road so gay. Oh; there is that Gretchen kissing her hands to me, and I will not look at her. Why? Because she was impertinent this morning, telling me that Karl had left off loving you, and was going to marry Luise."

"It was a silly joke, Max. I hope you did not get angry. What did you say?"

"Something that ought to have stopped her kissing hands to me," said Max.

"It was too foolish to be angry about, little brother. Some one said it to myself the other day, and I only laughed. I knew so well it was because I sent Karl a message to Luise the other evening. But Gretchen ought not to have said it to you, Max. When I go to my new home I don't think I shall ask her to come and see me. I do not want to hate anybody, and—"

"I will do the hating for you, Krescenz, and I hate everyone who says that Karl does not love you."

"Everyone! Don't give such a big name to two people, Max. If Karl did not love me, should not I be the first to know of it? Ah! do you see our little house peeping above the acacias up in the fields over there? How delightful it will be to live there, Max, with all the flowers growing in at one's windows. And Karl is providing this home for me! Ah, little

Max, this looks rather like loving one, doesn't it?"

Max was silent, and kept his face turned away, with a slight frown on the brows.

"I wish I could suddenly grow big, Krescenz," he said abruptly.

The sister laughed. "My dear, you must wait," she said gaily. "By-and-by you shall copy your brother Karl, and if you can manage to grow like him you will do very well. In the meantime, you are not quite so small as you were, my boy, when I first took you in my arms, and carried you about our poor garret, trying to put you to sleep. Mother had died the day before I was ten years old, and you were only born. I was a very little nurse, wasn't I? But it seemed to me that my heart was a hundred years old. How proud I was of you, and how I loved you!"

"And you worked for me, Krescenz?"

"Ah, didn't I? We were alone in the world, only you and me. I paid a poor old woman, a very, very old woman, who could not do anything else, a penny a day for taking care of you, and I worked for us two. I was a strong little girl, and as industrious as a bee. People gave me work to do; it was very hard until I was about fourteen, and then I learned to sew, and things began to be better. At sixteen I was able to rent a little room for myself, and so bring home my little brother. Ah, Max, how often we have been hungry together! and yet you are a brave boy for your age. I have pulled you through the worst, and now God has taken us both into happiness and safety. No more scanty crusts for you. No more sitting up all night, sewing by a candle, for me. No more pinching at the heart when rent-day is coming round. Who could have thought of it; that Karl, whom everyone admires, should have sought out me! I did not accept him hastily, Max, for I was afraid he might change his mind; afraid that he had not known what he was saying, or that he did not know perfectly how much people thought of him. But he would persist in loving me, he would, indeed; and that is why I laugh so much when the people tell idle tales. 'If you only knew, my good people,' I think; 'if you only knew how well I know.' And Max—you see I do not mind saying anything to you—I must confess that the greatest trouble I have had lately, has been the fear that so much sitting up at night was taking away all my good looks. I look so



sickly sometimes when the morning light comes in. Stare me well in the face, Max, and tell me if I am getting ugly."

"You are the prettiest and loveliest girl in the town, sister Krescenz."

"But I am not rosy, like Gretchen, nor are my eyes so big and bright as Luise's, nor—"

"No matter," persisted Max. "Not one of them can smile the way you do."

"After that I must say something nice to you, Max. Sit down here on the grass, and let me tell you the kind of life we shall have over in our little house yonder. We shall have four rooms of our own, and there are vines growing round all the windows. We shall have a pretty garden with bees and flowers, and a field with a cow in it. I shall do my sewing sitting under a tree, looking down on the Moselle. You will go to work with Karl, and in the evening you will both come home, and we shall have supper in the garden."

"I wish we had some now, Krescenz."

"I wish we had, my boy; and I think it is time to go and look for some coffee and bread."

The sister and brother turned their steps towards a pleasant summer-house of refreshment, built among trees, upon the high overhanging bank of the river, where the people of Trier love to drink coffee in the cool of the evening. As the girl and child took their simple meal in a nook of the projecting terrace, the blue Moselle rushed under their feet, and Trier lay bathed in ruddy glory in the distance before their eyes, with its strange contrasting outlines softened into magnificent harmony, and the fierce black Roman gates making a frown on the very front of the sunny landscape.

"How splendid it looks, the dear old town!" cried Krescenz. "Do you know, Max, I cannot understand why people ever leave their own homes to go out into the world."

"I should like to go out and see the world," said Max.

"You mustn't say so, Max. Nothing would ever induce me to leave Trier."

They were rambling among the trees on the hill-side, stopping now and then to lean forward and take a fresh peep at the beauty of the river and the exquisite gleams of the distance on either side.

"Oh, Krescenz, Krescenz! I have found a pair of lovers."

"No! Have you, Max?" said Krescenz with interest.

"Behind that large tree, in such a pretty nook. Just peep round and you can see."

"Hide, then, while I peep, so carefully."

Max retired while Krescenz leaned forward with a smile of mischievous delight, and peered from behind a screen of leaves, herself unseen by the objects of her interest. When the boy thought he had waited long enough, he came forth again, and plucked her by the skirt.

She turned to him slowly, and put her finger on her lip.

"Krescenz! Krescenz!" whispered the child, "what makes your face so dreadful! Are they ghosts?"

"Hush, Max! I cannot see, take me by the hand, and get me into some quiet place, where nobody will find us."

"Oh, Krescenz, you are ill! Are you going to die?"

"No, dear, I shall not die. Fetch me some water, and tell nobody."

Max obeyed, and while the red light paled on the Moselle, and purple mingled with the crimson and olive of its banks, the girl's white face lay on the moss, gazing blankly upward with fixed eyes. The tears trickled over Max's innocent cheeks as he nestled at her side and kissed her lips, her hands, and her hair.

"Oh, Krescenz! may I not call someone to come and help you home?"

"No, dear, no," said the young girl, starting up. "We are not going home any more. We are going away somewhere else, you and I together."

"What, away from Trier?"

"Yes, I am tired of Trier."

"I thought you said you could never leave Trier; and what will Karl say to you?"

"Oh, Max! oh, Max!"

"Where shall we sleep to-night, if we keep walking on at this rate?"

"We shall rest on the road, and to-morrow we will travel farther. There are other towns besides Trier, where industrious people can get work to do."

"Oh, Krescenz! I am afraid you have gone mad. Those people behind the trees must have been the wicked spirits we read about, and they have harmed you."

"Do you know who they were, Max? Karl and Luise. Gretchen was right, after all."

"But did they say they were going to be married?" said the boy. "Oh, don't

groan, Krescenz, and I will try and ask no more questions."

"Dear Max, there is nothing more for me at Trier. That is why we are going together out into the world."

"Oh that I could grow big and go back and kill him!"

"Hush! you must not talk such nonsense. You must take care of me now, as I have nobody else."

"That I will, indeed; but oh, Krescenz, my canary!"

"Somebody will take care of it, dear. We can get another."

"And your pretty little shrine?"

"Somebody else will kneel at it. I can pray to God anywhere, you know."

Deepening shadows dropped on the Moselle, and the two young figures hurried on through the purple twilight away from Trier.

#### IRIS.

##### A MEMORY AND A PICTURE.

THE small soft rain fell tenderly,  
A waning rainbow spanned the sky  
From flying grey to breaking blue;  
A wind-blown rose-spray shook its leaves  
Down from the porch's moss-grown eaves,  
Like snow-flakes gemmed with dew.  
One stood beneath, a still-faced youth,  
With lips of strength and eyes of truth,  
Waiting. The tangled leafage stirred  
To some swift passage; as he heard,  
His calm face quickened.  
Flushed with flight  
Through dripping wood-ways, with the light  
Of dauntless youth upon her, brake,  
Through parting boughs, a form to make  
The young world's dreams seem simply true:  
Raindrops besprent her wind-tossed hair,  
Her lifted eyes, of radiance rare,  
Were of such royal blue,  
The flag-flower bowed beneath her feet,  
Unnoticed in her passage fleet,  
With their deep hue might scarce compete.  
Swift, sweet, unspoiled, to love's keen sense  
Each limb spake passion's eloquence.  
"Iris!" he cried. Her cheek went flame;  
Was it with joy or subtle shame?  
A flying wood-nymph, god-espied,  
With wind-loosed tresses floating wide,  
Might stand so poised 'twixt shame and pride.

Ah, happy hour! Ah, meeting sweet!  
The echoes of those flying feet,  
The rain-drops' plash, the rustling leaf,  
Make music still that mocks at grief.  
A wildflower she, yet summer's rose  
More hidden charms might not unclose;  
Untamed—yet were there tenderness  
Like that of her most shy caress?  
Iris! The eastern singers say  
Those flowers on which the rainbow rests  
Are sweetest. Though her laugh is gay,  
And rapture from her eyes doth ray,  
Love in her bosom nests.  
Tender as Spring, as summer warm,  
And constant still through shine or storm,  
How should one limn her? Lo! her eyes

Dim the deep blue of southern skies!  
See, at her feet the flag-flower lies,  
The storm-bow bends above;  
Not pearls, but raindrops gem her hair.  
Ah! is there picturing may compare  
With her whom Spring should love?  
Iris! true child of shine and shower,  
Bright as the bow, and sweeter than the flower!

#### UNDER THE HAMMER.

##### FOREIGN AND COLONIAL PRODUCE.

FUR and feathers, frankincense and myrrh, anise and cumin, by no means exhaust the catalogue of articles useful, ornamental, or luxurious, brought to the hammer in Mincing-lane. Apart from the great drug sales, which take place fortnightly, on Thursdays, and the miscellaneous sales occurring from week to week, are certain auctions of those drugs which, in "the Lane," are called "special," and have, at fixed seasons, sales to themselves. Of this character are opium and indigo, sold as the crops arrive in this country during our English summer. Both opium and indigo are "big things," grown largely within certain districts, in demand all over the world, and, like many other natural productions, fluctuating severely in value, according to the abundance or scarcity of the last crop or the prospects of the next. Hence these special drugs are good "gambling" stock, as the market affords plenty of facility for trying the alternative known to speculators as "making a spoon or spoiling a horn." Holders of opium must have suffered seriously since last year, as the drug has undergone great depreciation in value, and a failure in the present crop—which would have made their fortunes—has not occurred. Opium, however, has not made or marred so many fair estates as indigo, the produce of a truly "sensitive" plant. There are indigo speculators in London who have made and lost their hundreds of thousands within a very few years—who have gone up like a rocket and come down like the stick. I am told of others who have made their money and kept it, and notably of one brilliant operator who, having secured a triple "plum," dropped out of the trade altogether, content with his splendid success. Operations in opium cannot be compared—at least in this country—with those in the famous dye-stuff which enriches the planters of Tirhoot; for, although morphine is largely manufactured here, and a vast proportion of the opium sent to North and South America and the West

Indies is imported into London first, and then repacked in small tins, yet it must be owned that a little opium goes a long way. Into the United Kingdom are imported annually from three to five hundred thousand pounds of the drug, worth about as many pounds sterling. Therefore, there is not so "much money in it" after all, but this deficiency is made up in the excitement of prices fluctuating with uncertain supplies. Thus, in 1869, only a trifle over two hundred thousand pounds were imported, while the returns of 1871 record nearly five hundred thousand. This was nearly all Smyrna opium—that is to say, opium grown near Kara-Hissar, Amasia, and Angora, which finds its way to Smyrna for shipment—the imports of Persian opium having been curiously small and irregular, until within the last three or four years, when its great strength in morphine has made this variety a favourite with manufacturers. What then becomes of the product of the vast opium-fields of British India, the great and thickly-populated country extending eastward from Agra, and including the districts of Benares and Bahar? Within this area of some hundred and twenty thousand square miles, no fewer than five hundred and sixty thousand acres are actually under poppy cultivation. Another great opium region consists of the broad table-lands of Malwa, and the slopes of the Vindhya Hills, in the Mahratta country. Large quantities of the drug are produced in the plains of the Punjab, and more or less all over India. How much is produced in that great peninsula cannot be ascertained, but the amount exported is accurately known. Over ninety thousand chests are annually exported from the presidencies of Bengal and Bombay, each chest weighing from one hundred and thirty to one hundred and sixty pounds; and the monopoly of Bengal, and the export duty on Malwa opium, bring a net revenue to the government of India of between seven and eight millions sterling. None of this comes to Europe. Whither, then, does it go? To the country with which we first "went to war," said the late Earl of Dundonald, "in order to enable iron-headed old rats to smuggle opium." John Chinaman takes nine-tenths of the Indian drug, and the Straits Settlements take the rest.

To see what opium is in the London market, let us make a call on courteous Mr. Cutler, at the bonded warehouses, Red

Lion-wharf, hard by Southwark-bridge. There is a touch of old Bream's-buildings about this warehouse, with its iron bars and iron doors, its keys, and bolts, and chains; but the nostrils of the visitor, instead of being attacked by a mingled odour of fried fish, strong waters, and stale tobacco, are filled with a heavy, acrid, aromatic air—sweet and yet bitter, oppressive but yet soothing withal. This is the odour of opium in bulk; truly in bulk: hundreds and thousands of cases lying piled around—an opium city, Poppyville, the capital of the Land of Nod, with long lines of streets, and massive blocks of buildings of a material slowly scraped, drop by drop, by myriads of hands from innumerable plants. The streets of Poppyville are narrow, and dark, and mysterious, with queer turnings and odd corners. Let us walk quietly down Lethe-street into Oblivion-square, meditating by the way on the powerful denizens of this odd corner of the great world, and put up at the Hôtel Proserpine. The dishes served at this queer hostelry are very satisfying; if partaken of liberally enough, they satisfy one for ever and aye. Smooth, hard-coated Karasá will attract one gourmand, while the soft, rough-coated Boghadiéh has charms for another. The quiet smoker can enjoy his pipe, the thirsty soul his dram of opium wine. Meat, drink, and smoke are served at the Hôtel Proserpine, but woe be to that traveller who pulls up too often at that house of entertainment for man and beast, which should be rather sought for health than pleasure, as the hostess soon tires of her guests. If these need her soothing care, she gives it at first readily enough; but, when too often appealed to, brings in a terrible bill, for her husband is a grim fellow, who must be paid to the day. There is no shirking his little account, with the great sprawling Pluto written at the bottom. Now and then, but very rarely, she, not unmindful of the day when she sported in the sunlight with her attendant nymphs, will plead earnestly for a favourite guest, and secure a respite for a De Quincey or a Coleridge; but ordinary customers must pay their shot at the Hôtel Proserpine, and pay to the day. How stand the books of the house with mankind, I wonder? On the one side, what countless lives saved, what unspeakable agonies assuaged! On the other, what record of weak indulgence, of bemuddled brains, of bodies and souls destroyed!



"Persian opium is bought by sample, Smyrna by inspection," says Mr. Cutler, as we emerge from Morphia-row into the suburbs of Poppyville. That is to say, the choice opium from Asia Minor is "inspected" by intending purchasers, before bidding at the monthly sale. Let us inspect a chest of prime Smyrna. Attendant spirits, singularly active denizens of Drowsyland, rip open the outer wooden case and the tin chest inclosed within. There is the opium in cakes or lumps of all shapes, and in size varying from a few ounces to two or three pounds. This form of the drug is called "scale" opium, not on account of its structure, but from the adaptability of these pieces to the weighing scales of the druggist. It is also christened "green-leaf" opium, from the fine green leaves in which each cake is wrapped. Taking up a cake, we proceed to inspect it, first making sure that it is soft and yielding to the touch, as these conditions are indispensable. The next step is to cut a deep gash into it with a penknife and to inspect the wound carefully. Prime Smyrna, when cut, shows an oily consistency, a fine brown colour, and emits a sweet scent of fresh poppies. This is the quality which fetches the highest price, and is mostly used for repacking to the West Indies in merchantable quantities. It is valuable for infusions—*laudanum*, *paregoric*, &c., and is far too valuable to be used in making morphine. For the latter purpose, Persian opium, stronger and coarser, is now largely employed. The Persian variety arrives in wooden chests, covered with hide and protected by sack-ing. As its value depends upon the morphine it contains—often as much as ten per cent.—it is sold by sample. From each cake is extracted, with a species of cheese-taster, a slender cylinder, to be handed over to the analyst, by whose verdict the biddings will be guided. Beauty of appearance, and other qualities valuable in retail trade, are unheeded in the case of Persian opium, which is prized only for its strength in the "active principle."

Other potent drugs and costly essences nestle under that dry arch of Southwark-bridge, which forms part of the Red Lion-wharf warehouses. That black stuff, worth some forty shillings per pound, is scammony—hideous to the taste but salutary to the stomach of biped and quadruped. Very choice scammony such as that on view is known by its fracture, and its faculty of producing a milky fluid when

wetted and rubbed. If it "milks," it will fetch a high price. It is simply the dried juice of the scammony root, a native of that fecund Asia Minor made so rich by the bounty of nature, so poor by the hand of blundering man. Deeper in the recesses of the arch, in a cool refreshing spot, is stored a product which, in costliness, throws its more useful neighbours into the shade. This is the world-famed otto, or, more correctly, attar, of roses. Mincing-lane, however, does not recognise the latter spelling. Philologists and chemists may do as they please, and call old drugs by new names, but to "the Lane" attar remains "otto," and he who called it aught else would be laughed at as much as the daring innovator who should venture to write vanilla, in the place of traditional "vanilloes." Otto, then, is here galore. Some comes in bottles, which display its beautiful light yellow colour and curiously-crystallised structure to perfection; but the best otto is not sent in bottles at all, but in the flat circular vessels of tinned copper called vases, or "cappers." The vase I hold in my hand contains about sixty ounces of otto, worth as many pounds sterling in the wholesale market. Five of these vases pack neatly into a box, which could be carried comfortably under my arm. Otto, the essential oil of roses, is one of those articles marked by the adulterator for his own. For sophistication the volatile oil of an Indian grass, known in commerce as geranium oil, is largely employed, detection being extremely difficult, even by what is called the congelation test, or temperature at which the oil crystallises; the crystallisation-point of pure otto being as high as fifty-five degrees of Fahrenheit, at which only five minutes are required to congeal it well. A curious practice regarding otto still prevails. For some unexplained reason it is sold in Turkish ounces and drachms, and at Red Lion-wharf Turkish weights are kept for this purpose and for weighing samples, consisting of one drachm of the precious oil. Higher up in the lofty warehouse, overlooking Father Thames, is the sponge floor, holding sponges enough to drink up a fair-sized river. The floor is covered with a fine stratum of sand. Piles of sand are swept up in the corners. The air is full of fine, soft, velvety sand, knocked out of the sponges, which are now sold by weight, with twenty-five per cent. allowance for sand; the ancient practice of allowing the buyer one

kick round, to get the sand out before weighing, having fallen into desuetude. Sponges are not generally sold openly, but at a species of private trade-auction, whence outsiders, defined generally as men keeping shops, are rigorously excluded. The children of Israel have the sponge trade very much in their own hands, and, as it is "a good thing," seem inclined to keep it there. All kinds of attempts have been made to utilise the many tons of fine sand shaken out of the sponges, but hitherto all have failed, the sand being so highly charged with salt as to make it completely useless. Adjoining warehouses are loaded from top to bottom with all kinds of foreign and colonial produce: China teas, a term which would once have been laughed at, but is now rendered necessary by the important place assumed by Indian teas, of great strength and excellent quality: coffees of all kinds—Ceylon and Java, African peaberry, and the coffee of Rio, better liked in Turkey than in England on account of its strong astringent flavour, for what little Mocha coffee there is does not go to Constantinople. On the coffee floor are mountains—Alps and Cordilleras—of coffee, first classified by an adept armed with a pantomime cheese-taster divided into compartments, which retain samples of the middle and two ends of the bag, and then shot out on to the selected heaps. Great skill and long practice are required in this "sorting," as a cargo of coffee will contain many shades of quality. When the mountains of loose coffee have been well mixed together, samples are issued and the berries brought under the hammer like other produce. Coffee and cocoa, tea and sugar, are knocked down from year's end to year's end in Mincing-lane, but it must not be supposed that all the produce trade is done by auction. Enormous private sales take place, and a great sugar broker will sell to a refiner any number of cargoes afloat. Refiners—much worried just now by the French and their stupid, coddling export bounty—need to look well ahead, as many of them convert from a thousand to twelve hundred tons weekly, and must therefore always be supplied with enough Java or Cuba, Porto Rico, Manilla, Honduras, or Barbadoes, to keep their devouring "plant" going. Plenty of beetroot sugar is also imported into this country in its unrefined condition, and fetches a high price.

Strolling one day down Mincing-lane, I resumed my search for the extraordinary creature known as a "drysalter"—a being whose occupation had long been to me a matter of curious speculation. Plunging originally into my moral consciousness, I found that the ideas of saltiness and dryness ran together, and the image of one engaged in curing bacon, hams, Bath chaps, and other incentives to thirst, was flung upon the retina of my mind's eye. Like a true *à priori* philosopher, I asked no questions, till years and failing health brought me to the tardy conviction that, perhaps, I might be wrong. I inquired of a friend in the City, who told me I was wrong—ridiculously wrong—absurd. "Nothing of the kind, my good fellow," said he; "another beast altogether. Your idea is as wrong as usual. You writing-fellows always jump at conclusions." Much abashed I humbled myself, and meekly said, "So glad to have met you. Of course, you can tell me what a drysalter really is? Set my mind at rest. What manner of man is he?" "Ha!" responded my Gamaliel of groceries—"ha! Not what you think, but er—quite different; nothing salt—dry, you know—fellow sells dye." I mildly suggested that dye was wet. "Not dye, stupid; but dye-stuffs, you know, before they are wetted." And away he dashed at a passer-by, and began inquiring about shellac. "Well," thought I, "I have grasped the impalpable; I have precognised the invisible; the drysalter is mine henceforth; I hold the mystery of his existence in the hollow of my hand. I can 'place' him. I will identify him, and brand him with his title." I descended on a friend learned in dry dye-stuffs: he showed me much choice safflower, and bewailed the falling off of that branch of trade since ladies left off wearing pink petticoats. He inducted me into the mysteries of cochineal, laying before me many samples of the humble insect who dies that he may dye. He revealed to me the peculiarities of indigo till, at last, I could restrain my pent-up feelings no longer, and cried, "I know your secret. You have kept it well; but it is safe with me. You are a drysalter!" No man ever looked more astonished. "Nothing of the kind," he said. "What on earth could have put that odd notion into your head? I am no more a drysalter than you are." I was dumfounded for a while; and, when I recovered speech, persisted, "Why deny your honourable

craft? There is nothing immoral, is there, in drysalting, whatever the nature of that occult pursuit may be?" "Nothing in life. Drysalters are very good fellows. Very rich." "But what, in Heaven's name, do they act, do, or suffer? What do they dry, and what do they salt?" "Don't quite know. Do something in dye-woods and gums, I think." "Oh, yes," rejoined I, "gums; yes, gums and, perhaps, chemicals, eh?" "Not quite sure. Most likely you are right." And I went forth in doubt and despair.

Pending the definition of a drysalter, I turn my steps down Hart-street and Crutched-friars to Jewry-street—a very disagreeable neighbourhood for the friars, by-the-way—and find myself in front of a huge building, inclosing a sizeable square of its own. Passing under a great archway, I enter the regions of Cærulea—the home of Blueskin. The walls are blue, the stones are blue, the doors are blue; blue mud splashes up as I cross the square; blue water, deeper-tinted than the "blue rushing of the arrowy Rhone," streams down the gutters; everything is blue but the sky, which is just now letting down a heavy summer shower. Under cover things look bluer than ever. The floor is permanently carpeted with a blue deposit; ceilings and walls, once white, have long since turned blue under the influence of the presiding genius; the air is full of a blue dust of intense fineness; the inhabitants are blue; the books are blue-books. A small specimen of the Blueskin tribe, a drummer-boy in the army of His Cærulean Majesty King Indigo, conducts me through blue passages and up blue steps to a blue lift, which whisks us rapidly aloft into a region of blueness, which would put Bluebeard's nose out of joint could he see it. Seated at tables are the members of King Indigo's Long Parliament, sitting in judgment on their master. They are curious-looking fellows, these denizens of the Blue Chamber. Their nether limbs are cased in stout leggings, their bodies in blue blouses with blue hoods and paper caps, and a blue leather apron helps to give them a black, or rather, blue-smith air. They are very busy, sitting with great trays and packages of fine Java, best Bengal, prime Guatemala, or less valuable Madras or Manilla before them. This "sampling" is a serious business, a blunder in which may lead to "blue ruin." Lumps are broken to show the quality of

the fracture, which, if the article be true indigo, will always "line"—that is, put on a bronzy lustre when marked with the finger-nail or rubbed against another piece. A keen and practised eye is required to judge the colour, which is most esteemed when of a deep purplish tone—Oxford blue in short. A fine texture of the material, technically called "paste," also characterises the higher qualities. The eye, of course, must judge of the colour, but the quality of "paste" is submitted to the ordeal by touch. Mr. Gladstone once compared "the feel" of a piece of fine old porcelain—*pâte tendre*—to that of a baby's skin; and fine indigo conveys a somewhat similar, but perhaps rather more velvety, sensation. A north light is that in which indigo buyers place the greatest reliance, and they are sorely disturbed in their work by the rain and cloudy atmosphere to-day. A prime difficulty of a very critical business is the almost impossibility of preserving to the eye its delicacy of perception while gazing for hour after hour at blue, blue, nothing but blue; for that fine organ, the human eye, is apt to become debauched by looking too long on one colour. To prevent mistakes, "guides" are employed. These are pieces of indigo stored in a box, and carefully labelled with the prices fetched by them. Thus, when a buyer is fairly puzzled what price he ought to give for the goods before him, he has the option of referring to his "guides," and, by careful comparison, insuring a correct conclusion. When all are hard at work, the air becomes thick with fine particles, which soon settle on the features and give to the workers a look of weird ghastliness, nowhere else beheld out of a pantomime. Work over, the blue-men disperse, carefully packing their "guides" and note-books, and descend to the lower floor of the building, past thousands of chests of indigo, piled on the various flats, and representing almost fabulous wealth; for this blue sheet-anchor of dyers is costly stuff, risky to grow, and requiring great care in its manufacture. Fine Java may be worth, according to the market, some nine shillings and sixpence per pound; best Bengal, perhaps a shilling less; while Madras and Manilla bring far lower prices. Arrived in the basement, the busy men proceed to doff their true-blue livery, and return it to their respective lockers. A tremendous process of ablution is now gone through, for the fine dust works its way right into the skin to so great a depth



as sometimes to make a hot-bath necessary; but, scrub and scrape as one may, the indigo can never be got out all at once, as for a week or ten days after a spell at indigo sampling, intense blue will crop up. Washed and adorned in sumptuous raiment, the indigo men sally out of the great warehouse, very different beings from the leather-aproned folk of half-an-hour ago. They are now, many of them, gay, fashionable young bucks, with a very West-end air about them. For if there be, mayhap, a few "Sir Balaams" nowadays, the "dull cit" is a creature of the past. Our modern City men not only know how to make their thousands and tens of thousands, but how to spend them with taste and discernment. Mincing-lane "père" has a handsome house out of town, and finds his carriage waiting for him at the railway station to take him home to dinner; or else lives in Tyburnia or Belgravia, and looks in at the Club for an hour or so, till his wife calls to drive him round the Park. Young Mincing-lane is a capital fellow—rides straight to hounds, pulls a right good oar, has a yacht down the river, and can wield the willow, as well as the hammer, like a hearty young Englishman as he is.

### MY LITTLE DEARS.

MOST people's dears, however economical, still cost something to maintain and clothe. To obviate this, I have looked up a few dears which, although they come from foreign parts and have to be bought with a price—the purchase of fair ones is no novel custom—are yet cheaper than many a Light of the Harem, while their food and drink are extremely inexpensive, and their raiment perfectly so, being supplied entirely by themselves. Moreover, like an Eastern despot, I allow myself a multitude of favourites, and can understand *La Fontaine's* wicked line, "*Diversité, c'est ma devise.*" Nevertheless, I manage to indulge that weakness without being unfaithful to old-established favourites.

With the Mormon elders, the last-come beauty is often the one that is made the most of. So it is apt to be with me, although no Mormon. The freshest arrival, at the present time of writing and claiming the most marked attention, happens to be a nice little thing, known to its acquaintance as *Cephalotus follicularis*—a creature with pockets, which seem inclined to re-

main empty.\* I can address it with the song, "My friend and pitcher;" for my dear *Cephalotus* is, in plain truth, nothing more than a tiny pitcher-plant. Had it a voice, it would sing to me in reply, "Dear Tom, this green jug which I hold in my hand—has passed through as many transformations as its earthen compeer." It ought to have been a leaf, but is metamorphosed into a bag, and one of these days it may turn out to be a fly-trap; for it has a lid, and a lip fitting close to it before opening, which lid looks as if it might shut again at a moment's warning.

*Cephalotus's* travels are not less remarkable than its appearance. They might supply the text for a lesson on physical geography. It reaches me from Swan River, Australia; not direct, but through the intermediacy of Monsieur Louis Van Houtte, who, like several of his English fellow-horticulturists, devotes his energies to the introduction and spread of vegetable dears, both great and small. *Cephalotus* was, not very long ago, what small purses call costly. The first sight of it brought the water into amateurs' mouths, and a specimen fetched from two to three guineas—considerably more than its weight in silver, and equivalent, when small, to its weight in gold.

The plant takes its rest in winter; you must not fancy it is dead because it has gone to sleep and cast off its leaves and pitchers. Van Houtte's purveyors take advantage of its slumbers to tear it away from its native swamps. Having no almanac to consult on arriving here, it supposes our summer to be its own, although it is exactly the reverse. Moistened and covered with a bell-glass, in light, damp, turfy soil mixed with decaying moss, in an earthen pot or pan, and in semi-shade, it puts forth its leaves and its bright little pitchers as cheerily as if it were at home. Indoors, on a table or window-sill, or on a shaded pedestal in the open air, it is partly raised to the level of the eye, and invites inspection of its singular beauties. It inevitably suggests the question, "What can be the purpose or object of such a strange and elaborate conformation?" The flowers, borne aloft on a slender stalk that supports them in common, are whitish and inconspicuous, but valuable, because they afford a chance of multiplying the little treasure; for it is the very curiosity

\* They have since become partially filled with what looks like water and house-flies.

to ornament a study, a boudoir, or any place where it can be looked at frequently.

It needs no hothouse, but simply rational culture based on the knowledge of its constitutional requirements, which are detailed in the catalogue No. 153, issued by L. V.H., Ghent, Belgium. He sends out this once three-guinea little dear (when he has it) for half-a-crown apiece, plus the carriage and the packing; which last performance is a wonder to behold. It is a pleasure to receive from L. V.H. a basket or a case of delicate plants, if only for the gratification of unpacking them and of admiring the skill with which they have been prepared, secured, and provisioned for their journey. It is packing carried to a luxurious pitch. There is wadding to support the weak ones; chaff and husks to prevent the crushing of tender ones; inverted pots to cover thirsty ones and prevent evaporation by the way. There is string enough to fly a kite sky-high; moss enough to make beds for beves of hermits; sticks enough to roast heretics brown, if the law allowed that edifying pastime.

Now that the carnivorous propensities of certain plants are a fashionable topic for discussion, vegetables suspected of that craving may be admitted to our domestic intimacy; for, even if odd, they are far from ugly, are extremely interesting, and not so expensive as to limit their possession to millionaires. The *Sarracénias*, pitcher-plants, or side-saddle flowers, are among the most curious of vegetables. *S. purpurea*, from Canada, has proved hardy here, and costs about the same as *Cephalotus*. *S. psittacina*, or parrot-like, is more costly, but handsomer, with the convenience of also being a dwarf. Its ascidia (which is merely Greek for little leather bags or bottles) are admirably spotted with white and stained with pink. *S. flava*, the yellow pitcher-plant, larger than the preceding, is so called from the colour of its flowers. All are bog plants, which indicates their mode of culture. Though not of the very easiest, it is still a culture quite possible for people who will exercise a little practical common sense. *Sarracénias* are sometimes grown in glass cages or Wardian cases, in order to maintain their atmosphere moist. It is doubtful, however, whether this treatment, which keeps the air around them stagnant and unchanged, suits them best. A bell-glass can always be removed from time to time. Mrs. Loudon has an excellent sug-

gestion, namely, to grow them, when kept in a room or on a balcony, in double pots, the interstice being filled with moss, thereby preventing sudden thermometrical and hygrometrical changes. In the United States the *Sarracénias* are believed to be a sure antidote to the small-pox. One is named *S. variolaris*. Some at least of the species may be raised from seed. Pitcher-plants of the genus *Nepenthes* require the temperature of a hothouse, are free-growing climbers, and, however remarkable, are of no service as little pets. The pitchers of some of them are so large, that people might say you had converted your residence into a pothouse.

Plants with a story to them have their attraction, even if the story belongs only to their name. Lapeyrouse, one of France's bravest seamen, fought the English, was wounded and taken prisoner, off Belle-Ile-en-Mer. In fact, the circumstances of those times made fighting the English his first occupation. French and English were then both taught, as if it formed part of their respective catechisms, that one duty in which they must never fail was to destroy each other with all their heart, with all their mind, with all their soul, and with all their strength. A better employment afterwards assigned to him was maritime discovery. His mysterious, probably tragical, end has acquired for him a popular celebrity. He sailed from Botany Bay in 1788, and has never been heard of since. Some suppose that his two ships, *La Boussole* and *L'Astrolabe*, were simultaneously wrecked on some unknown reef; others prefer the theory that he and his crews were eaten and enjoyed either by his friends, the New Caledonians, or by ours, the Fijians.

On receiving a present of seed labelled "*Lapeyrousia juncea*," resembling duck-shot in much except weight, I sowed it, saying, "Here is a memorial of the unfortunate navigator, which will be remembered perhaps as long as the poem in his praise which gained the prize at the *Toulouse Jeux Floraux*, in 1823. If his grave had not been in the stomachs of savages, we might plant a few of these flowers upon it." This seed took a long time to vegetate. It sent forth grass-like, sword-shaped leaves; it formed corms or bulbs as big as a respectable pea, then went to sleep, sprung up again, and finally, as a reward of my patience, presented me with pretty bright-pink flowers inclining to brick red, at the top of a slender stem. Fancy a tuft

of green blades ten or twelve inches high, amidst which are borne, on slim wiry stalks, unpretentious but pleasing six-petalled blossoms, with a darker red spot on the three lower ones towards the centre, and you have my little protégée when grown in quantity.

But man is doomed to disillusion. Subsequent research suggests that the plant is, perhaps, dedicated, not to the brave mariner who met a sailor's fate, but to one Lapeyrouse, a naturalist, of Toulouse, who had a local literary reputation, and also his troubles under Robespierre. He is the author of several botanical treatises, and left besides, says his biographer significantly, "numerous manuscripts which will probably never see the light." It is some comfort to know that rejected articles are no nineteenth-century novelties.

Worse than all, someone has changed my little flower's name into *Anomatheca juncea*, which is a souvenir of nobody whatever that I remember. But, however called, it represents a family of very small Cape bulbs, the *Ixias* and *Sparaxis*, which are specially suitable for culture as little pets, in pots or boxes, by amateurs. In the open ground their tiny bulbs, of the same colour as the soil, are apt to be lost when the leaves disappear; and, as frost would destroy them, they must be wintered indoors. They like plenty of sun and air, moderate waterings, and light soil rich in vegetable matters, such as sandy heath-mould. Raised from seed, most of the family produce, the third year at latest, their graceful, neat, and brightly-marked flowers. They may be propagated, too, by offsets, which also take their time to bloom. They are but sparingly grown by exhibitors at shows, and still less by horticulturists, who have to supply the vast quantities and masses of showy things required for house decoration on party-giving nights, and other like occasions. Nevertheless, we sometimes find gardeners who, besides regarding flower-growing under its commercial aspects, also indulge their own private tastes, and will keep in a sunny corner, not for the public eye, a frame bestarred with *Ixias* and others of their tribe. These bulbous floral pigmies do not demand much care; they are charming on a close inspection, are variously tinted, some sweet-scented, take up as little room as growing flowers can well occupy, and are far from expensive to obtain. In winter, when the bulbs are at rest, you put the pot in which they grow in a dry closet, down a cellar, under your

bed, or in any frost-proof storing-place where you would keep dahlias, gladioluses, and other tender sleeping beauties.

Plants with a private history of their own come to be regarded almost as personal friends, especially when the incident connected with them is distant either in space or time. I have a dear little houseleek, the spiderweb—*Sempervivum arachnoideum*—which I found at the foot of the Canigou, one of the Eastern Pyrenees, more than nine thousand feet high, and anything but a commonplace mountain. With most mountains we associate, around their lower half, verdure, sloping pastures, forests, waterfalls; and higher up, green turf again, unless the summit terminates in a rocky peak. The Canigou shows you nothing of the kind. On one shoulder, a scattered group of wretched firs makes the absence of trees the more conspicuous. Take an enormous Egyptian pyramid of unhewn stone; blow it up with gunpowder; the ruins will make a Canigou. It is a heap of vast blocks and boulders tumbled together, in whose interstices the snow on the summit, which is not visible below, by its gradual melting maintains mere threads of water, which feed a scanty vegetation, unseen, in crevices, deep hollows, and gaps in the great wreck. At a distance, and even when standing at its foot, you would take the Canigou to be as barren of plants as a London brick wall. But for those who will search in its intricate crannies it is rich in botanical rarities and gems.

One August morning—how hot it was!—we tried to ride up to the ruins of the Abbey of Saint Martin du Canigou. A light breeze came straight from the Mediterranean. The fresh elastic air was an antidote to the heat. Soon after starting from Le Vernet, and before beginning to climb, I found, quite unexpected in that southern latitude, growing between stones in a horizontal position in partial shade, the grass-like forked spleenwort—*Asplenium septentrionale*. The village of Castell was soon traversed, or rather escaped from. The passage was a running the gauntlet between hands, valid and invalid, held out on either side to beg. The mayor—for the hill-side hovels have a mayor—seems unaware of the Ordonnance, "*La Mendicité est défendue dans le Département des Pyrénées orientales*;" or, perhaps, the mayor himself occasionally indulges in a native propensity to hold out his hand. Beyond Castell shade was not partial, but null.



Nevertheless, the sunbeams were more bearable than the beggars.

The mountain path became so rough and stony that we often preferred dismounting from our ponies, and leading them over the more rugged bits of zigzag. And such stones! frequently shapeless lumps of iron-ore, from which are extracted Catalan knives to cut Alphonsist throats or gash Carlist stomachs. In spite of the heat, in the uncemented stone walls which now and then flanked the path where they were least wanted for safety, grew several pretty ferns, among them the brittle bladder fern—*Cystopteris fragilis*—which, like the wall rue, seems fond of establishing itself in the chinks of a rough vertical surface. The heat, too, suited sundry bright butterflies, grasshoppers, dragon-flies, lizards, and swift-winged beetles, which beguiled our upward progress by fluttering to and fro.

My narrative is not sensational; we didn't break either our own or our ponies' necks: but in a burning corner at one of the turns, I beheld some brave, rosy-red, starlike flowers, peeping above a heap of stones that would have roasted a pig in a primitive Otaheitean oven. It was the spiderweb houseleek bidding us welcome to the Canigou. We secured it at once, and succeeded in carrying it to a milder climate.

Here is a little invaluable plant! It is curious and pretty, even when not in flower; and it does flower with satisfactory readiness. One is shooting up its stem as I write. It will stand a baking; it will stand sharp frost; it will stand pelting rain; it will stand burying in snow. It will live for weeks without either earth or water. It will grow in a pot, on a wall, in a parterre, on a rock, indoors or outdoors. It never deserts you, winter or summer; for if an individual dies after blooming, its stem will be studded with little ones, and it may already have produced a family of offshoots. Whether, like others of the houseleek genus, it wards off lightning when planted on roofs, and cures whitlows if crushed and applied as a plaster, I have no experience to offer.\*

I must confess to a fancy for the Filmy ferns. Their pellucid, semi-transparent fronds look like crisp green seaweed, growing in air. They tempt one to eat them, with bread and butter, after a

dipping in pickle-flavoured vinegar; and in a ship, long suffering from a famine of salad, that is assuredly the way they would go. They too, like *Cephalotus*, demand bell-glass culture, which is far from unfitting them for indoor favour and ornament. The *Hymenophyllums* and *Trichomanes* are well known and frequently adopted; why not, as a change, take up *Todea superba*?

"Oh, but it is a tree-fern; too big, and too costly; four or five pounds for a handsome specimen," you say.

True, madam; but please remember that you were little, and certainly pretty, before you were big. So may a tree-fern be; especially this, which, I fancy, is never of very lofty stature. The dells in New Zealand, whence it comes, must be veritable vapour-baths. So humid an atmosphere could not permanently have great depth. Mr. B. S. Williams offers young ones at five shillings each; imported crowns from one to three guineas. Take a baby *Todea*; coddle it under a crystal dome; when it outgrows its dwelling, give it a larger one. The investment can never prove ruinous, because you can always sell or exchange it for something else; and the bigger it grows the more it will be worth.

My last and least little dear, on the present occasion, is a very little one indeed. Its stature is measured by fractions of an inch. But it spreads, and spreads, and covers itself with berries, looking as if a child had broken its necklace, and let the brilliant orange-red beads fall on a carpet of green. This plant, *Nertera depressa*, say botanists, "forms dense cushion-like tufts. It has slender densely-matted pilose or glabrous creeping stems, with small leaves, varying from ovate to cordate-reniform in shape, on short petioles. The flowers are sessile in the axils of the leaves, and very inconspicuous. When the berries are produced in abundance, contrasting with the dark green foliage, the plant presents a very charming appearance, and is a valuable acquisition to any rockwork."

I first made the acquaintance of *Nertera depressa*, and obtained it, last autumn, in MM. Gazelle and Son's nursery, Ghent; but, like almost every vegetable novelty, it was already introduced to Kew, where it berried on the rockery. It is one of the plants the French call "gazons," turfs; from their low, close, and moss-like growth. It has a rather wide geographical range, being a native of the

\* This and several other species of *Sempervivum* are coming into request for carpet-bedding. They have the advantage over the *Echeverias* in being hardy—that is, the great majority of the species.

South American Andes, Australia, New Zealand, and some of the Pacific Islands. Whether hardy here, the writer is ignorant; probably not. But there is no need to fetch it from the southern hemisphere, for Robert T. Veitch offers, in the *Gardeners' Chronicle*, "several hundreds of this beautiful and exceedingly attractive plant, all well berried." Its price, not stated, cannot forbid its acquisition.

## A CHARMING FELLOW.

BY FRANCES ELEANOR TROLLOPE.

AUTHOR OF "AUNT MARGARET'S TROUBLE," "MABEL'S PROGRESS," &c. &c.

### CHAPTER XXXII.

THE accounts which had reached Whitford from Wales, of the wonderful effects produced by David Powell's preaching there, sufficed to cause a good deal of excitement among the lower classes in the little town when it was reported that Powell would revisit it, and would preach on Whit Meadow, and also in the room used by the "Ranters," in Lady-lane.

The Wesleyan Methodists in Whitford now felt themselves at liberty to allow their smouldering animosity against Powell to break forth openly, for he had seceded from the Society. Some said he had been expelled from it, but this was not true, although there was little doubt that, at the next Conference, his conduct and doctrine would have been severely reprimanded; and, probably, he would have been required publicly to recant them on pain of expulsion. Should this be the case, those who knew David Powell had little difficulty in prophesying the issue. However, all speculations as to his probable behaviour under the reproof of Conference were rendered vain by the preacher's voluntarily withdrawing himself from the "bonds of the Society," as he phrased it.

Then broke forth the hostile sentiments of the Whitford Wesleyans against this rash and innovating preacher. Unfavourable opinions of him which had been concealed, or only dimly expressed, were now declared openly. He was an Antinomian; he had fallen away from the doctrines of Assurance and Christian Perfection; he had brought scandal on large bodies of sober, serious persons, by encouraging wild and extravagant manifestations among his hearers; his exhortations were calculated to do harm, inasmuch as he preached a doctrine of asceticism and self-renunciation, which, if followed,

would have the most inconvenient consequences. That some of these accusations—as, for example, that of Antinomianism, and that of too extreme self-mortification—were somewhat incompatible with each other, was no impediment to their being heaped simultaneously on David Powell. The strongest disapprobation of his sayings and doings was expressed by that select body of citizens who attended at the little Wesleyan chapel. And yet there was, perhaps, less bitterness in this open opposition to him than had been felt towards him during the last days of his ministration in Whitford. So long as David Powell was their preacher, approved—or, at least, not disapproved—by Conference, a struggle went on in some minds to reconcile his teaching with their practice, which was an irritating and unsatisfactory state of things, since the struggle in most cases was not so much to modify their practice, in order to bring it into harmony with his precepts, as ingeniously to interpret his precepts so that they should not too flagrantly accuse their practice. But now that it was competent to the staunchest Methodist to reject Powell's authority altogether, these unprofitable efforts ceased, and with them a good deal of resentment. The chorus of openly expressed hostility to the preacher, which, I have said, made itself heard in Whitford, arose, in a great measure, from the common delight in declaring, where some circumstance unforeseen by the world in general comes to pass, that we perceived all along how matters would go, and knew our neighbour to be a very different fellow from what you took him to be.

Here old Max was triumphant; and, it must be owned, with more reason than many of his acquaintances. He had openly quarrelled with this fanatical Welshman, long before the main body of the Whitford Wesleyans had ventured to repudiate him.

One humble friend was faithful to the preacher. The widow Thimbleby maintained, in the teeth of all opposition, that, though Mr. Powell might be a little mistaken here and there on points of doctrine—she was an ignorant woman, and couldn't judge of these things—yet his practice came very near perfection; and that the only human being to whom he ever showed severity, intolerance, and lack of love, was himself. Mrs. Thimbleby was not strong in controversy. It was not difficult to push her to her last resort—namely, crying silently behind her apron. But there was some tough fibre of loyalty in the meek

creature which made it impossible for her to belie her conscience by deserting David Powell. The cold attic at the top of her little house was prepared for his reception as soon as it was known that he was about to revisit Whitford; and Mrs. Thimbleby went to the loft over the corn-dealer's store-house in Lady-lane one Sunday evening to beg that Nick Green would let Mr. Powell know, whenever he should arrive, that his old quarters were waiting for him, and that she would take it as a personal unkindness if he did not consent to occupy them. She could not help talking of the preacher to her grand lodger Mrs. Errington, of whom she was considerably in awe. The poor woman's heart was full at the thought of seeing him again. And not even Mrs. Errington's lofty severity regarding all dissenters and "ignorant persons who flew in the face of Providence and attempted to teach their betters," could entirely stifle her expressions of anxiety as to Mr. Powell's health, her hopes that he took a little more care of himself than he formerly did, and her anecdotes of his angelic charity and goodness towards the poor, and needy, and suffering.

"I should advise you on no account to go and hear this man preach," said Mrs. Errington to her landlady. "Terrible scenes have taken place in Wales; and very likely something of the kind may happen here. You are very weak, my poor soul. You have no force of character. You would be sure to catch any excitement that was going. And how should you like, pray, to be brought home from Lady-lane on a stretcher?"

But even this alarming suggestion did not deter Mrs. Thimbleby from haunting the "Ranters'" meeting-room, and leaving message after message with Nick Green to be sure and tell Mr. Powell to come up to her house, the very minute he arrived. Nick Green knew no more than the widow the day and hour of the preacher's arrival. All he could say was, that Powell had applied to him and to his co-religionists for leave to preach in the room—little more than a loft—which they rented of the corn-dealer in Lady-lane. Powell had been refused permission to speak in the Wesleyan chapel to which his eloquence had formerly attracted such crowds of listeners. Whit Meadow would, indeed, be probably open to him; but the year was drawing on apace, autumn would soon give place to winter, and, at all events in the evening, it would be vain to hope for a large number of listeners in the open air.

"Open air!" echoed Mrs. Thimbleby, raising her hands and eyes; "why, Mr. Green, he ought never to think of preaching in the open air at this season, and him so delicate!"

"Nay, sister Thimbleby," responded Nick Green, a powerful, black-muzzled fellow with a pair of lungs like a blacksmith's bellows, "we may not put our hand to the plough and turn back. We are all of us called upon to give ourselves body and soul in the Lord's service. And many's the night, after my day's work was over, that I've exhorted here in this very room and poured out the Word for two and three hours at a stretch, until the sweat ran down my face like water, and the brethren were fairly worn out. But yet I have been marvellously strengthened. I doubt not that brother Powell will be so too, especially now that he has given up dead words, and the errors of the Society, and thrown off the yoke of the law."

"Dear, I hope so," answered Mrs. Thimbleby, tremulously; "but I do wish he would try a hot posset of a night, just before going to bed."

The good woman was beginning to walk away up Lady-lane, somewhat disconsolately, for she reflected that if Nick Green measured Mr. Powell's strength by his own, he would surely not spare it, and that the preacher needed rather a curb than a spur to his self-forgetting exertions, when she almost ran against a man who was coming in the opposite direction. They were not twenty paces from the door of the corn-dealer's store-house, and a lamp that burnt above it shed sufficient light for her to recognise the face of the very person who was in her thoughts.

"Mr. Powell!" she exclaimed in a joyful tone. "Thanks be to the Lord that I have met you! Was you going to look for Mr. Green? He is just putting the lights out and coming away. I left a message with him for you, sir; but now I can give it you myself. You will come up with me to my house, now, won't you? Everything is ready, and has been these three days. You wouldn't think of going anywhere else in Whitford but to my house, would you, Mr. Powell?"

She ran on thus eagerly, because she saw, or fancied she saw, symptoms of opposition to her plan in Powell's face. He hesitated. "My good friend," said he, "your Christian kindness is very precious to me, but I am not clear that I should do right in becoming an inmate of your house."



"Oh, but I am, Mr. Powell, quite clear! Why it would be a real unkindness to refuse me."

"It is not a matter to be settled thus lightly," answered Powell, although at the same time he turned and walked a few paces by the widow's side. "I had thought that I might sleep for to-night at least in our friends' meeting-room."

"What! in the loft there? Lord ha' mercy, Mr. Powell! 'Tis cold and draughty, and there's nothing in it but a few wooden benches, and the rats run about as bold as can be, directly the lights is put out. Why 't would be a tempting of Providence, Mr. Powell."

"I am not dainty about my accommodation, as you know; and I could sleep there without payment."

"Without payment! Why, you might pay pretty dear for it in health, if not in money. And, for that matter, I shouldn't think of asking a penny of rent for my attic, as long as ever you choose to stay in it." Then, with an instinctive knowledge of the sort of plea that might be likely to prevail with him, she added, "As for being dainty about your accommodation, why I know you never were so, and I hope you haven't altered, for, indeed, the attic is sadly uncomfortable. I think there's worse draughts from the window than ever. And it would be a benefit to me to get the room aired and ockypied; for only last week I had a most respectable young man, a journeyman painter, to look at it, and he say, 'Mrs. Thimbleby, we shan't disagree about the rent,' he say; 'but I do wish the room had been slept in latterly; for I've a fear as it's damp,' he say, 'and that that's the reason you don't use it yourself, nor haven't let it.' But I tell him the only reason why I didn't use the room was as you might be expected back any day, and I couldn't let you find your place taken. And he say if he could be satisfied of that, he may take it after next month, when you would likely be gone again. So you see as you would be doing me a service, Mr. Powell, not to say a pleasure."

Whether David Powell implicitly believed the good creature's argument to be derived from fact, may be doubtful; but he suffered himself to be persuaded to accompany her to his old lodgings; and they begged Nick Green, who presently overtook them, to send one of his lads to the coach-office, to bring to Mrs. Thimbleby's the small battered valise which constituted all Powell's luggage.

"I would have gone to fetch it myself," said the preacher, apologetically, "but, in truth, I am so exceeding weary, that I doubt whether my strength would avail to carry even that slender burden the distance from the coach-office to your house."

When he was seated beside Mrs. Thimbleby's clean kitchen hearth, on which burned a fire of unwontedly generous proportions—the widow declared that, as she grew older, she found it necessary to her health to have a glow of warmth in her kitchen these chilly autumn nights—when the preacher was thus seated, I say, and when the red and yellow firelight illuminated his face fully, it was very evident that he was indeed "exceeding weary;" weary, and worn, and wan, with hollow temples, eyes that blazed feverishly, and a hue of startling pallor overspreading his whole countenance. For a few minutes, whilst his good hostess moved about hither and thither in the little kitchen, preparing some tea, and slicing some bacon, to be presently fried for his refectation, Powell sat looking straight before him, with a curious expression in his widely-opened eyes, something like that of a sleep-walker. They were evidently seeing nothing of the physical realities around them, and yet they unmistakably expressed the attentive recognition by the mind of some image painted on their wondrous spheres. The true round mirror of the wizard is that magic ball of sight; for on its sensitive surface live and move a thousand airy phantoms, besides the reflection of all that peoples this tangible earth we dwell on. Powell's lips began to move rapidly, although no sound came from them. He seemed to be addressing a creature visible to him alone, on which his straining gaze was fixed. But suddenly his face changed, and was troubled as a still pool is troubled by a ripple that breaks its clearly glazed reflection into fantastic fragments. In another moment he passed his thin hand several times with a strong pressure over his brows, shut and opened his eyes like a dreamer awakened, drew his pocket Bible from his breast, and began to read with an air of resolute attention.

"Will you ask a blessing, Mr. Powell?" said the widow, timidly.

He looked up. A comfortable meal was spread on the white deal table before him. Mrs. Thimbleby sat opposite to him in her old chair with the patch-work cushions; the fire shone; the household cat purred drowsily; the old clock clicked off the

moments as they flowed past—tick tack, tick tack. Then there came a jar, a burr of wheels and springs, and the tinkle of silver-toned metal striking nine. In a few moments the ancient belfry of St. Chad's began to send forth its mellow chimes. Far and wide they sounded—over the town and the flat-meadow country—through the darkness. Powell sat still and silent, listening to the bells until they had done chiming.

"How well I know those voices!" he said. "I used to lie awake and listen to them here, in the old attic, when my soul was wrestling with a mighty temptation; when my heart was smitten and withered like grass, so that I forgot to eat my bread. The sound of them is sweet to the fleshly ears of the body; but to the ears of the spirit they can say marvellous things. They have been the instruments to bring me many a message of counsel as they came singing and buzzing in my brain."

The widow Thimbleby sat looking at the preacher, as he spoke, with an expression of puzzled admiration, blended with anxiety.

"Oh, for certain the Lord has set a sign on you," she exclaimed. "He would have us to know that you are a chosen vessel, and He has given you the gifts of the Spirit in marvellous abundance. But, dear Mr. Powell, I doubt He does not mean you to neglect the fleshly tabernacle neither; for, as I say to myself, He could ha' made us all soul and no body, if such had been His blessed will."

"We thank thee, O Father, most merciful. Amen!" said Powell, bending over the table.

"Amen!" repeated Mrs. Thimbleby. "And now pray do fall to, and eat something, for I'm sure you need it."

"It is strange; but, though I have fasted since five o'clock this morning, I feel no hunger."

"Mercy me! fasting since five o'clock this morning? Why, for sure, that's the very reason you can't eat! Your stomach is too weak. Dear, dear, dear; but you must make an effort to swallow something, sir. Drink a sup of tea."

Powell complied with her entreaty, although he expressed some misgiving as to the righteousness of his partaking of so luxurious a beverage. And then he ate a few mouthfuls of food, but evidently with-

out appetite. But seeing his good friend's uneasiness on his behalf, he said, with the rare smile which so brightened his countenance:

"Do not be so concerned for me. There is no need. Although I have not much replenished the carnal man to-day, yet have I been abundantly refreshed and comforted. I tarried in a small town on the borders of this county at midday, and I found that my ministrations there in the spring season had borne fruit. Many who had been reclaimed from evil courses came about me, and we gave thanks with much uplifting of the heart. And, although I had suffered somewhat from faintness before arriving at that place, yet, no sooner were these chosen persons got about me, and I began to pray and praise, than I felt stronger and more able for exertion than I have many a time felt after a long night's rest and an abundant meal."

Poor Mrs. Thimbleby's mind was divided and "exercised," as she herself would have said, between her reverent faith in Powell's being supported by the supernal powers and her rooted conviction regarding the virtues of a hot posset. Was it for her, a poor, ignorant woman, presumptuously to supplement, as it were, the protection of Providence, and to insist on the saintly preacher's drinking her posset? Yet, on the other hand, arose her own powerful argument, that the Lord might have dispensed with our bodies altogether had it so pleased Him; and that therefore, mankind being provided with those appendages, it was but reasonable to conclude they were meant to be taken some care of. At length the widow's mental debates resulted in a resolution to make the hot posset, and carry it up to the preacher's bedside without consulting him on the subject—"For," said she to herself, "if I persuade him to swallow it out of kindness to me, there'll be no sin in the matter. Or, at least, if there is, it will be my sin, and not his; and that is not of so much consequence."

In this spirit of true feminine devotion she acted. And having coaxed Powell to swallow the cordial mixture—as a mother might coax a sick child—she had the satisfaction of seeing him fall into a deep slumber, he being exhausted by fatigue, excitement, and lack of nourishment.